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Title: Need to provide 20 per cent bonus to tea garden workers in Assam with a view to check labour unrest in the State.

DR. ARUN KUMAR SARMA (LAKHIMPUR): Sir, the problem of tea garden workers due to arbitrary fixation of percentage of bonus by manipulation of profit and loss account by the concerned management has become a regular source of labour unrest in Assam. Deprivation of legitimate bonus has gone to the maximum level with further manipulation of tea price in auction market by vested interests. Not only consequent loss to the Government exchequer, it also indicates a grim future of Guwahati Tea Auction Market when, due to flaw in Government policy, producers got a handle to sale 70 per cent of their processed tea directly without going through auction market.

It is, therefore, urged that the Union Government intervene to ensure grant of 20 per cent bonus to the tea garden workers with transparent policy and to ensure survival of Guwahati Tea Auction Market from impending closure by modification of existing norms to compel the gardens for selling at least 80 per cent of the processed tea through Guwahati Auction Market. Legislative measures are also required to ensure that the balance sheet of such defaulting gardens are scrutinised by the Accountant-General to prevent future manipulation. Timely intervention is also urgent to ensure implementation of labour welfare measures by strict enforcement of concerned law including Assam Tea Plantation Labour Act 1951. Strict enforcement of concerned Central Law on mandatory contribution of the employers to the Assam Tea Plantation Provident Fund and Pension Fund in Assam by prosecution of defaulting gardens which defaulted for hundreds of crores without any penalty so far may be taken into account.